

Zoos Victoria's Fighting Extinction Species

REGENT HONEYEATER

Anthochaera phrygia

Critically Endangered



Fewer than 400 Regent Honeyeaters are thought to occur in the wild, the result of ongoing declines over the past 30 years. Population modelling indicates a higher than 50% probability of extinction during the next 20 years, placing it among Australia's most imperilled birds. The ongoing declines of Regent Honeyeaters in the wild indicate that it is time to expand the captive program to provide a greater level of insurance against extinction.

A successful captive-breeding and release program, led by Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Birdlife Australia and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has been underway since 1995 to bolster the wild population. Zoos Victoria will increase its support for this species by increasing the holding and breeding capacity of Regent Honeyeaters across the captive breeding program.

ZOOS
VICTORIA
Fighting Extinction

Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are focused on working with partners to secure the survival of our priority species before it is too late.



The ongoing declines of Regent Honeyeaters in the wild indicate that it is time to expand the captive program to provide a greater level of insurance against extinction. Halting the declining trend for this iconic honeyeater requires the dedicated efforts of many partners. Strong foundations are in place, but it will take time to increase the extent and quality of Regent Honeyeater habitat. Importantly, critical support measures are in place, including field surveys, while efforts to mitigate threats in the wild take effect.

KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Increase the size of the insurance population.
- Support releases to the wild.
- Support actions in the field to protect habitat and improve breeding.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Supporting role in captive breeding program.

THE SPECIES

The Regent Honeyeater is patchily distributed from Central Victoria through New South Wales, to south-east Queensland. It is highly mobile, occurring only irregularly at most sites. The species currently has four key breeding areas: the Chiltern Area in Victoria, and the Bundarra-Barraba, Capertee and Hunter Valley districts in New South Wales.

As woodland nomads, Regent Honeyeaters follow the flowering of their favourite eucalypts. The unpredictability of their movements and the vast distances they travel make it difficult to obtain reliable population estimates and, at times, the whereabouts of much of the population is unknown.

Regent Honeyeaters occur mainly in box-ironbark forest and woodland areas inland of the Great Dividing Range. They particularly prefer habitat on moist and fertile soils, such as valleys and floodplains. These areas have also been preferentially targeted for agricultural development.

The major cause of the long-term decline of the Regent Honeyeater is the clearing and degradation of their woodland and forest habitat. Other key threats include increased competition for nectar resources by other birds, and high rates of nest predation. The small size of the wild population is a major concern.

A successful captive-breeding and release program, led by Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Birdlife Australia and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has been underway since 1995 to bolster the wild population. The role of Zoos Victoria is to support these partners by increasing the holding and breeding capacity of Regent Honeyeaters across the captive breeding program.

THE PLAN

We will support the recovery of this species by:

Expanding Zoos Victoria's captive breeding program to support releases to the wild with a new complex at Werribee Open Range Zoo.	\$690,000
Building the capacity of our partners to undertake captive breeding.	\$80,000
Support field actions to identify important habitat and enhance breeding performance.	\$30,000 p.a
Total cost over five years	\$920,000

How can I help?

You can support our efforts to secure a future for the Regent Honeyeater by supporting our Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2019-2024 at:
zoo.org.au/donate

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Birdlife Australia
birdlife.org.au

Taronga Conservation Society
taronga.org.au

Department of Environment,
Land, Water and Planning
delwp.vic.gov.au

Office of Environment and Heritage
environment.nsw.gov.au

Australian National University
anu.edu.au

Monash University
monash.edu